



From top: Felicity's mother, father and sister Jennifer, the Maldives, William Shakespeare, Casablanca, Love In The Time Of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez, MI5 headquarters and Stevie Wonder

**The prized possession you value above all others...** A Theo Fennell fountain pen a boyfriend gave me 25 years ago – I won't say which one! I don't take it out of the house in case I lose it. But I don't love it for sentimental reasons – the gold nib just writes so beautifully.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** Not pushing my sister, Jennifer, who died in 1984 aged 49, into seeking the best treatment for her bowel cancer. She lived in Bombay and the healthcare there back then was not great. I wish I'd convinced her to come to Britain, or go to America, but I was young and not forceful enough.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

Newspapers, coffee and breakfast in the Maldives. Waking up there is magical. I'd rehearse a play all morning, then go to my Hampshire house for a big barbecue with the extended family, cooked by my sons [Charley, 39, and Jake, 24] and nephew [Karan, 50]. Later, I'd have a Pilates class, then take my cocker spaniel George for a walk. Finally, I'd have a romantic dinner with my boyfriend Michael Rudman [the US theatre director she divorced in 1990 and reunited with in 1998] at La Famiglia, near our home in Chelsea. I've eaten there for 30 years and love it.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Wine, men and shopping. I love them all, but if you get too much of a good thing it can be a disaster!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Love In The Time Of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez. It's a novel about star-crossed fate and, while the story is sad, it has humour.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd go to MI5 HQ in London. Like actors, spies assume an identity but theirs is for life.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** The ingratitude shown by some young people to the incredible education they are given in this country.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Casablanca is a gem – its classic lines give me goose bumps.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My father Geoffrey, who managed a touring repertory company in India where we lived until I was 20. I acted in his productions throughout my childhood, which was the most phenomenal education. He was a maverick with a huge personality.



'The Good Life portrayed me as sweetness and light, but I can be difficult and very short-tempered'

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of actress Felicity Kendal*

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** I don't drink ale, but I would to meet Shakespeare. Nothing matches his work.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Be brave and travel the world. Seeing different cultures will give you a greater perspective on life.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** The teachings of Native Americans are based on the rules of nature and can teach you so much.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My mother Laura's gold bangles. They mysteriously vanished from her body after she died of a broken heart, following my sister's death.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To write a novel. I got halfway through one eight years ago.

**The poem that touches your soul...** To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell. It's beautiful, passionate and sexy. The message is not to waste your life.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm nice and easy-going. The Good Life portrayed me as sweetness and light, but I can be short-tempered and difficult. People are taken aback if they see that dark side. Sorry to destroy the illusion!

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** The divorce from my first husband [Drewe Henley, in 1976, after seven years] created my darker side. Until then, I'd been naive.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd incarcerate child abusers in an awful place.

**The song that means most to you...** Sunny by Stevie Wonder. It tells you sadness can become something else.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Working at the National Theatre in 1979 with director Peter Hall on four plays, beginning with Amadeus. I'd achieved my dream.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My sister Jennifer was the absolute star of our family and held us together. Seeing her suffer and her three children lose their mother was awful.

**The unfulfilled ambition that haunts you...** To speak Italian. I've been learning for ten years, but I can still only understand it. My laziness is to blame.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Family. Friends. Loyalty. And be generous.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I converted to Judaism for my second marriage, which means the service is rigid, but I wish everyone could have a glass of champagne or a vodka martini before the funeral! I'd want a party atmosphere with jokes, jazz and Somewhere Over The Rainbow by the late Hawaiian singer Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. I'd like to be buried in my garden in the country, but I think it's against the law. Maybe that's a crime I could commit!

**The way you want to be remembered...** For a long time and for being great fun!  
**The Plug...** Felicity's documentary on William Shakespeare's plays in India will be shown on the BBC in April. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

PS...

*Miss Piggy and pals return to the big screen in The Muppets – in cinemas now. Olivia Colman opens in Hay Fever at London's Noel Coward Theatre. And Brits winner Emeli Sandé's first album Our Version Of Events is out Monday*



**NEXT WEEK**

- Celia Imrie shares her diary from the set of her new film The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
- Sweet or savoury – our pancake recipes are flipping delicious
- Jamie Oliver cooks with a twist of lemon
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings